

# A Fish That Shoots Its Dinner?

by Carl Burger

Blue Ic  
Power Builder

8



1 In the warm waters of Southeast Asia lives a small fish that gets its food by shooting insects. It's called the archer fish. Of course, it doesn't really shoot arrows. The archer fish spits water at its target. Now, that may seem quite harmless to you. But one drop of water can stun a small insect long enough for the archer fish to eat it up.

2 When the archer fish goes hunting, it swims close to the top of the water. It scouts about for a good meal. When it sees an insect perched on an overhanging branch, the archer fish gets set to strike. It sticks its mouth out of the water. It takes aim and fires a drop of water at its target. If it misses, it tries again until it hits its mark. When the insect drops into the water, the archer gobbles it up. The archer isn't a fussy eater. It will shoot at flies, moths, ants, bees, and spiders. It has even been known to knock a small lizard into the water.

3 The archer is quite a small fish. It's only four to six inches long. But for such a small fish, it can shoot surprisingly far. And its aim is very good. From three to five feet away, the archer fish almost always hits its mark on the first try. It can shoot a single drop of water as far as twelve feet. But its aim isn't as good when it's that far away.

4 The archer fisher's water pistol is part of its body. A narrow groove runs along the top of its mouth. When its tongue is pressed against this groove, it makes a little tube. To shoot, the archer fish fills its mouth with water. Then, it quickly closes its gills. This forces the water out of its mouth. The archer fish knows how to control the water, too. It can make the water come out one drop at a time. Or it can make the water come out in one big squirt.

5 Though the archer fish is a good hunter, it can be fooled. There's a story about a man who lived in Thailand. The man was striking a match to light a red lantern while sitting on his porch. The porch was built over a stream where many archer fish lived. First, the man heard two or three soft splashes on the ceiling. Then, a squirt of water put out his match! Most likely an archer fish had mistaken the yellow glow of the match for a firefly. The man was surprised. But the fish was probably surprised, too. It must have looked all over for the tasty firefly it had shot at!

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## COMPREHENSION

**A** Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.

- 1 Another good name for this story is
  - a** The Man on the Dock.
  - b** The Squirting Hunter.
  - c** The Fish in the Stream.
- 2 You can tell from this story that an archer is a person who
  - a** shoots insects.
  - b** spits water.
  - c** shoots arrows.
- 3 The archer fish can squirt water because it
  - a** has a water pistol.
  - b** jumps high out of the water.
  - c** can make a tube in its mouth.

- 4 The archer fish sticks its mouth out of the water to
  - a** get a clear shot at an insect.
  - b** keep the insect from seeing it.
  - c** fill its gills with air.
- 5 The archer fish knows that a stunned insect will
  - a** taste better.
  - b** fall into the water.
  - c** fly into its mouth.

## LEARN ABOUT WORDS

**B** Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- 1 mark to shoot at (1)
- 2 knock out; daze (1)
- 3 searches; looks (2)
- 4 resting; standing (2)
- 5 eats fast and greedily (2)
- 6 hard to please (2)
- 7 stream; spurt (4)

**C** **too** = also

**two** = the number after one

Words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings are called homophones. *Too* and *two* are homophones.

Look at each word in **bold type**. Note the paragraph number. Look at the paragraph and find the homophone for the word in bold type. Which of the homophones fits in the blank in the sentence? Write the word.

8 **seam** (1)

It doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ dangerous.



## LEARN ABOUT WORDS (continued)

### 9 read (5)

I haven't \_\_\_\_\_ about them either.

### 10 herd (5)

I've never \_\_\_\_\_ of an archer fish.

## THINK ABOUT IT

**D** A fact is something that is true. An opinion is what someone thinks.

**Fact:** Archer fish eat insects.

**Opinion:** It is the strangest fish alive.

Read each sentence. If it can be proved, write *Fact*. If it cannot be proved and is what someone thinks, write *Opinion*.

- 1 The archer fish lives in Southeast Asia.
- 2 The fish has an odd-looking mouth.
- 3 Everyone is amused by the archer fish.
- 4 Sometimes, the fish can hit a target that is ten feet away.
- 5 It closes its gills to shoot water.

**E** A contraction is a short way of writing words. An apostrophe (') shows where letters are left out. Some contractions are made by putting a verb and *not* together.

*aren't* is made from *are not*

Other contractions are made by putting a pronoun and a verb together.

*it's* is made from *it is*

*I'll* is made from *I will*

Read each sentence. Which two words make up each underlined contraction? Write the two words.

- 6 The archer fish isn't big.
- 7 He's found in the rivers of Southeast Asia.
- 8 This fish doesn't need a water pistol.
- 9 There aren't too many fish like him.
- 10 He'll shoot at any insect.